



Cultural Action Plan  
April 19, 2008  
**THE CULTURAL SUMMIT**

The Salisbury City Council adopted a Resolution of Intent September 4, 2007, to adopt a goal to investigate and create a Cultural Action Plan. On April 19, 2008, a Council-appointed steering committee presented a cultural summit to the community at the Trolley Barn. Mr. Robert Paolino was the MC for *Salisbury's Got Talent*. Len Clark of the *Salisbury Post*, Mark Zenow (Hootie and the Blowfish connection), and Charlotte radio personality Joey Popp were judges. Chris Zink provided stage lights and Jimm Mosher ran sound. The Catawba College "Vernaculars" were the house band. Livingstone College provided a student volunteer to assist the judges. The Rowan Arts Council, Looking Glass Arts Collective and many volunteers provided brochures and represented various art forms and organizations.

The event at the Trolley Barn began at 2 p.m. with the well-received Amadeus Youth Chorus performing *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in concert, at 2:45 Mary Berryman Agard made a presentation regarding the Cultural Action Plan, and at 4 p.m. the talent show started with the 12 finalists from the four categories of music, dance, children and other competing.

The \$1,000 first place prize went to Virginia and Melvin Rush, \$500 second place went to Robert Jones, and \$250 for third place went to Adam Broyles. In the children's category, \$100 first place prize went to Adam Broyles, \$75 second place prize to Arisa McDonald, and \$50 third place prize to Taylor Linker.

### **SURVEYS**

Mrs. Agard had a drawing for prizes for individuals who filled out and submitted surveys. The surveys so far show her Salisbury in terms of our strengths; she recommended ways to grow in those strengths. This is a good growth moment in the history of Salisbury. The surveys collected at this summit will further show public opinion about the culture and future needs of Salisbury. (Understand to reach for needs people already have.)

### **PRESENTATION**

There have been many requests for a formal copy of consultant Mary Berryman Agard's report that was presented at the cultural summit. This may be provided under separate cover at a later date. Many representatives of the arts community were present and very interested in her thoughts and ideas.

Salisbury has many blessings that can be contributed to public and private development. The consultant will provide the city with recommendations on how to invest dollars for the benefit the cultural community here. She will recommend some financing tools. We have wonderful local foundation support here, but we are losing a generation that was very generous to our cultural community. The next generation will need to invest, too. It is difficult for organizations to find operating support for daily expenses. This is a meaningful gift that is in too short supply. This is a crisis in America today.

The Rowan Arts Council has redefined themselves in their mission of education and artistic support. The old method of the Arts Council being a fundraising arm does not work; particularly if you do not have the corporate employers with employee giving. This experience is true across the nation.

Elected official, volunteers, patrons and public arts programs should discuss arts education for children. Salisbury needs a community-wide commitment to a cultural scholarship fund. Piedmont Players is opening a family theater and the Rowan Public Library has made a commitment for all ages.

This is a wonderful destination for day-trippers from the region. Keep shops open until 9 o'clock on a particular day(s). Salisbury has the Rowan Convention and Visitors Bureau's support. Salisbury could benefit from more restaurants and street vendors, expanded trolley services, and public restrooms in downtown Salisbury. Green space is needed downtown for cultural activities. There is an unmet physical infrastructure. The Rail Walk Arts District is coming alive—the area will need lighting and sidewalks. Arts play a part in reclaiming blighted neighborhoods. Don't build a performing arts space.

The city has a great population of visual artists and Rowan Cabarrus Community College is emerging as a center for visual arts. There is a lack of marketing for the visual artists. Collectives can bring traffic of people if they know the artists are here. Water Works has a mobile unit that can bring art to other parts of town.

There is a disincentive to provide music venues coming from ASCAP, BMI, SESAC\*—they have been the death of many clubs in the country. Through municipal participation, businesses could obtain these licenses. (These organizations are extremely inflexible.)

\*Performing rights organizations, such as SESAC, BMI and ASCAP are businesses designed to represent songwriters and publishers and their right to be compensated for having their music performed in public. By securing a license from SESAC, for example, music users (i.e., television and radio stations, auditoriums, restaurants, hotels, theme parks, malls, etc.) can legally play any song in their repertory. Without a license from a performing rights organization, music users are in danger of copyright infringement.

Special events for mixing and mingling are enjoyed here. The City of Salisbury could create a municipal package of support which offers low-cost delivery of art services. Having a festival? Who do you ask for information about permits, insurance, alcohol, or the noise ordinance? The City could make a modest investment in stations, media, public address system, and projection then, make possible for organizations to use these items.

Mary Berryman Agard noted the importance that every community needs a welcoming newspaper—what a treasure that is.

Media arts are missing from our resources. There is a deficit of Celtic music and pop culture here is underdeveloped. There is an emergence of Hispanic and African American culture. All this must be balanced with the European fine arts.

Provide summer learning for students. The neighborhood level is served by churches, symphony, and Parks and Recreation—can the children get there? Provide transportation to neighborhood centers. Have the developers pay impact fees or provide community spaces.

Mary observed that arts organizations could benefit from engaging in discussions. Salisbury does not have an entity engaged in comprehensive planning and promotion of the arts, a central calendar, or a central Web site. Salisbury needs leadership development. Create a safe volunteer based arts organization. Have joint recruitment fairs where happy matches are made.

Whatever decisions the community makes, “Go on a diet you will actually do.”

Audience comments:

- Cover a section of street for a food court.
- The coming together of arts leadership is very important. We need to know about one another and share ideas. Mary has wonderful ideas--this is a wonderful beginning.
- Culture is the name all things we hold dearest to our hearts.
- Comment cards are a terrific opportunity to be heard.
- Reinvigorated arts council is encouraging.
- What happens to small organizations? They need advertising power.
- Salisbury needs special grant programs to get things started.

Respectfully,

Diana Moghrabi